



MANAGEMENT MATTERS

the public management research association newsletter

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The Origins of the Public Management Research Association

Barry Bozeman, Georgia Institute of Technology
H. George Frederickson, University of Kansas

Before first-hand knowledge of the origins of the Public Management Research Association (PMRA) is lost in the mists of time, we decided that history would be favorably served by making this record. PMRA is now organized like many other “ordinary” academic or scholarly associations, with a membership base, conferences, a journal, and a newsletter. But how PMRA reached its present-day “ordinary” status is both an interesting story and a case study of organizational evolution and managerial behavior.

The PMRA story began in the mid-1980s as two rather separate stories. One is the story of the origins and evolution of the Public Management Research Conferences (the conferences). The other is the story of the origins and evolution of the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (JPART)*. We begin with the story of the Research Conferences.

The Public Management Research Conferences

There was, for those interested in scholarly public management research, an accumulation of frustrating issues in the mid-to-late 1980s. This frustration reached its apogee at the annual meeting of the Academy of Management in San Diego in 1990, with a dinner and late night conversation between Barry Bozeman, Brinton Milward, James Perry, and Hal Rainey. After airing their accumulated frustrations with the arrangement of professional associations having to do, in one way or another with public management research, they all agreed that something had to be done to create an alternative forum for public administration research because there was no professional association with a venue exclusively devoted to it. Barry Bozeman picked up the ball and ran with it.

Comings and Goings

Miner P. Marchbanks III, 2005 graduate of Texas A&M University, has joined the MPA faculty at Texas Tech University.

Nicole Darnall has joined the faculty at George Mason University as Assistant Professor of Environmental Science & Policy.

Brinton Milward was inducted as a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration in November 2005.

The Maxwell School of Syracuse University announces its new "Collaborative Management Initiative," co-directed by Rosemary O'Leary, Distinguished Professor, and Catherine Gerard, Professor of Practice. The education component of The Maxwell School's collaborative management initiative will begin with eight new or refurbished graduate "mini" courses in collaborative problem solving to be launched in fall, 2006, through the Department of Public Administration. The research component of the Maxwell School's collaborative management initiative will begin with special issues of *Public Administration Review* and the *International Public Management Journal* on the topic of collaborative public management. Additional endeavors will be announced in 2006 and 2007.

Sung Min Park was awarded the Sage Publications Best Doctoral Conference Paper Award from the Public and Nonprofit Division at the annual conference of the Academy of Management in Honolulu, Hawaii in August. His paper is entitled, "The Leadership and Motivations Effects in Public Agencies: The Empirical Research of Federal Employees' Perceptions, Values, and Attitudes." Sung Min Park is a second-year doctoral student who is originally from Seoul, South Korea. His research focuses on public organizational behavior and public personnel management.

As with much of the intellectual history of U.S. public administration, the story of the origins of the present day semi-annual conferences of the Public Management Research Association began with the organization of research conferences at Syracuse University's Maxwell School. The initial impetus was frustration with the fragmentation of public management scholarship. Barry Bozeman and other Maxwell colleagues, particularly Stuart Bretschneider and Jeffrey Straussman, had often discussed the fact that there were at least two public managements. To some, especially those in the public policy schools, public management focused almost exclusively on experiential knowledge and case studies and clinical approaches. Many of these scholars identified closely with the emergent Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management. Another group of public management scholars focused more on empirical research akin to the industrial psychology-based work done in business schools, but anchored in an effort to understand what is different, if anything, about the public context of public management work. These scholars tended to be more closely associated with public administration programs and often affiliated with the public and nonprofit section of the Academy of Management or with the American Society for Public Administration. Yet another group, and perhaps the largest, were political scientists who identify rather strongly with the American Political Science Association and were active in the Public Administration Section of APSA. While there was some overlap between these groups, the breach was considerable. The groups tended to focus on quite similar research topics and shared many teaching and research interests but, at least at that time, interacted to only a limited degree and seemed to make limited use of one another's work.

Bozeman drew up a plan for a conference having the explicit aim of bringing these two groups together to share state-of-the-art work in these very different modes of public management research. Knowing the difficulties of convening researchers with different norms and backgrounds, Bozeman drew up a plan that would target specific scholars and pay the expenses for many of the participants. He discussed the plan with several Maxwell colleagues, and public management scholars at other universities; refined the plan; and then brought it to Dean John Palmer, asking him to devote Maxwell institutional funds to support the conference. Convincing Dean Palmer proved easy enough. Palmer was immediately taken with the idea and quickly understood the value of promoting this relatively new and still amorphous research field. He authorized the funds and encouraged Bozeman to organize a faculty committee to identify leading researchers who should be given personal invitations as well as to develop a general call for papers.

The response from the designated invitees and from the respondents to the general call for papers was extremely encouraging and the program was set. More than 30 papers were accepted for panels running in concurrent sessions, excepting only an initial plenary panel focused explicitly on the intellectual character of public management. The conference

included not only many luminaries but also many soon-to-be leaders in the field. Some of the graduate students who assisted with the conference have by now had distinguished careers. These include, among others, Gordon Kingsley (Georgia Tech), Patrick Scott (Missouri State University), Monica Gaughan (Georgia Tech), Julia Melkers (University of Illinois-Chicago) and Sanjay Pandey (University of Kansas)

The conference was convened on the second floor of (old) Maxwell Hall during September, 1991. The conferees produced many fine papers, a number sufficient to suggest that the program committee be encouraged to seek a publisher. Jossey-Bass Publishing agreed to publish an edited volume. Since there were more high quality papers than could be produced in a single volume, the committee decided to have all submissions peer-reviewed and to accept those receiving the highest rating. About half of the conference papers were included in the volume *Public Management: The State-of-the-Art*. That volume remains useful not only for the substantive content of its many fine papers included, but also as a snapshot of public management scholarship, circa 1992. What one misses from reading the volume are the exciting and beneficial discussions that occurred at the conference, not only at the panels but spilling over to local restaurants and the Sheraton Hotel where most attendees were lodged. The conference helped bridge the gap among different approaches to public management and helped conferees to build new professional relationships and new social capital. The volume only hints at the intellectual foment of 1992 public management research and the excitement of coming together to confront intellectual controversies.

The Maxwell School conference designers never intended to develop an institution and had little role in the subsequent institutionalization of the Public Management Research Conference. This was the doing of faculty at Wisconsin, Georgia, Kansas, Texas A&M, Indiana, USC and other institutional hosts. The original conference was designed as a “one off,” but seemed to create or at least highlight a demand.

Using essentially the model developed for the Maxwell School conference, Donald Kettl and Brinton Milward organized and hosted what has come to be known as the Second Public Management Research Conference, held on the campus of the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1993. Many papers from the Wisconsin conference were included in *The State of Public Management* edited by Kettl and Milward and published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 1996.

In 1995 a similar conference organized by George Frederickson was held on the campus of the University of Kansas. Frederickson and Jocelyn Johnston edited *Public Management Reform and Innovation: Research, Theory, and Application*, which included many papers from that conference. It was published by the University of Alabama Press in 1999.

By this time the sequence of Research Conferences had become somewhat formulaic. Participants in the earlier conferences continued to participate. The conferences were small, usually between 100 and

For the second year in a row, one of the Ph.D. graduates of the Department of Public Administration and Policy at the University of Georgia has garnered three awards for a dissertation completed there. **Sergio Fernandez's** winning dissertation, entitled “Explaining Contracting Effectiveness: An Empirical Analysis of Contracting for Services Among Local Governments” has been awarded the 2005 NASPAA Dissertation Award, the Leonard D. White Award of the American Political Science Association for best dissertation in public administration, and the 2005 best dissertation award from the Public and Nonprofit Section of the Academy of Management. Dr. Fernandez is now on the faculty of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University. As was also the case last year, with 2004's award-winning dissertation research of alumnus Young Han Chun, this year's study was completed under the supervision of Professor Hal G. Rainey as major professor.

Professor **Keely Jones** joined the faculty of the University of Georgia's Department of Public Administration and Policy, in the School of Public and International Affairs, for fall 2005. Dr. Jones completed her Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Notre Dame, with a specialization in nonprofit studies. She is contributing to the department's curriculum in the administration of nonprofit organizations. As Professor Jones joins the faculty, the department's interdisciplinary character is further enhanced. The Department of Public Administration and Policy is now home to scholars with advanced degrees in economics, law, political science, public administration, public policy, and sociology.

Professor **Hal G. Rainey** has been selected as the 2005 recipient of the University of Georgia's School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) Award for Excellence in Teaching. Rainey, an internationally known scholar of public management, teaches graduate courses in leadership as well as organizational theory and behavior. He also serves as major professor for several Ph.D. candidates.

The National Science Foundation has awarded a three-year, \$1,230,808 project to three Co-PIs at the University of Illinois-Chicago, one of whom is Assistant Professor and PMRA member **Sharon Mastracci**. The project is entitled “Women in Science and Engineering: Network Access, Participation, and Career Outcomes.” Much of the research on barriers that women face in the sciences and engineering suggests that women’s advancement and success depends on early identification of, participation in, and adequate access to networks. But how networks determine women’s career outcomes has yet to be explored. This study extends Dr. Mastracci’s previous work on women in nontraditional occupations, which resulted in the book *Breaking Out of the Pink Collar Ghetto* (M.E.Sharpe, 2004).

Fred Thompson, Grace & Elmer Goudy Professor of Public Management, Atkinson Graduate School of Management, Willamette University, shared the Association for Budgeting and Financial Management’s Aaron B Wildavsky Award for 2005 with **L.R. Jones**, Admiral Wagner Professor of Financial Management, Naval Postgraduate School. The Wildavsky Award recognizes lifetime scholarly achievements in the field of public budgeting and finance. Prior recipients have included Sunny Ladd, Roy Bahl, Richard Fenno, Irene Rubin, and Allen Schick.

Susan Webb Yackee joined the faculty at the University of Southern California’s School of Public Policy, Planning and Development as an Assistant Professor in August of 2005. Dr. Yackee had previously served as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Scholars in Health Policy Research Program at the University of Michigan. In November of 2005, Dr. Yackee was awarded a \$60,000 Domestic Policy Fellowship from the Smith Richardson Foundation to continue her research on administrative agency rulemaking.

Reliable sources report that **James Svava**, professor and former chair of political science of the North Carolina State University has just taken a new position at Arizona State University.

150 invited participants. Unlike large professional association conferences held in hotels, these conferences were on university campuses, a comfortable environment for research scholars. Participating faculty members often included their doctoral students as paper co-authors and as conferees. As these student participants have themselves become faculty members they have tended to continue to participate in subsequent conferences. Just as the first conference at the Maxwell School was subsidized, the pattern of at least some local subsidy has continued. Attempts to bring together research scholars from the traditions of public administration scholarship and policy studies scholarship have waxed and waned, some conferences achieving this objective more effectively than others. The panel and paper presentation settings for these conferences have tended to be small and the discussions rather advanced. For conferees, the likelihood of publication of their conference papers appears to have resulted in papers being completed before the conferences. General conference participation has tended to be taken seriously, with papers being read in advance of panels and a high level of discourse on the papers.

What has come to known as the Fourth Public Management Research Conference was organized by Hal Rainey, Laurence O’Toole, and Jeffrey Brudney and held on the campus of the University of Georgia in 1997. From this conference, the book *Advancing Public Management: New Developments in Theory, Methods and Practice*, edited by Brudney, O’Toole, and Rainey, was published by Georgetown University Press in 2000. By this time, however, it was clear that from the initial Public Management Research Conference at Syracuse University, some authors had preferred to publish their papers in academic journals and had independently submitted their papers to them for review. Because many of these papers were submitted to the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, George Frederickson, the editor-in-chief of *JPART*, discussed with the principals of the Georgia conference the possibility of an accelerated review system for research conference papers and the dedication of some space in *JPART* for their publication. As a result, several of the papers from the Kansas and the Georgia conferences were published in *JPART* with an indication to readers that they were papers presented at the respective research conferences.

At this point the biennial sequence of Public Management Research Conferences was even more institutionalized. The first evidence of this was an informal arrangement by which the hosts of the previous conferences serving together as an *ad hoc* committees to call for proposals from universities to host the next conference and to make the selection of the site for the next conference.

The Fifth Public Management Research Conference was organized by Kenneth Meier and held at the Bush School of Texas A & M University in 1999. Unlike earlier conferences, the Texas A&M conference did not produce a book. Instead, the *Public Administration Review (PAR)*, joined *JPART* and the two journals divided up the conference

papers and invited those authors who wished to participate to submit their papers for accelerated review.

In 2001 the Sixth Public Management Research Conference was organized by Lois Wise and held on the campus of Indiana University, hosted by the School of Public and Environmental Affairs. The Seventh Public Management Research Conference was organized by William Gormley and held at Georgetown University in 2003. The Georgetown Conference was the first held under the aegis of PMRA. The Eighth Public Management Research Conference was organized by Yan Tang and held at the University of Southern California in October 2005. The Ninth Public Management Research Conference is being organized by Brinton Milward and will be held in 2007 at the University of Arizona.

Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory

Like the origins of the Research Conferences, the germ of what is now *JPART* also traces to the Maxwell School. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, while a professor at the Maxwell School, Dwight Waldo served as the editor-in-chief of the *Public Administration Review*. It was Waldo's opinion that *PAR* was not publishing enough empirically based research and that there was too little field-based research being done by public administration scholars. In an effort to stimulate research in the field, Waldo appointed his then junior colleague George Frederickson to the newly established position of research editor of *PAR*. For the next several years many of the leading scholars in the field were invited to write research syntheses for *PAR* or to publish their own research in *PAR*. These efforts may have slightly improved the standing of empirical research in the field and the presentation of that research in *PAR*, but near the end of his editorial tenure Waldo made this wonderfully understated point having to do with the paucity of empirically based research articles in *PAR*: "It is hard for a journal to publish manuscripts that have not been submitted to it."

During this same period the field of policy analysis or policy studies was separating itself from public administration and among policy studies scholars the phrase "public management" took the place of public administration. Waldo and others took the view that this development was, on the whole, good for the field, particularly if there were strong bridges between various approaches to the field.

In the 1970s and 1980s there were several articles in *PAR* and elsewhere generally critical of the quality of research scholarship in public administration. These criticisms included a particularly unfavorable review of doctoral dissertations in the field in terms of their weak empirical bases and research methodologies. Articles in the leading journals in the field were likewise criticized for being mostly "pre-empirical" and "pre-theoretical."

The idea of a new journal dedicated entirely to empirical research and theory development and testing in both public administration and

David Coursey is on a visiting professorship at Arizona State this Spring where he is involved in decision and science management research at the Decision Theater, a world-class facility for science-based, informed analysis to help the community and policy makers visualize the future (www.decisiontheater.org).

Question: What two time award winning public management book is cited by Michael Crichton in his novel *State of Fear* as being among those books "most useful in preparing this novel"?

Answer: *Managing for the Environment* by Rosemary O'Leary, Bob Durant, Dan Fiorino, and Paul Weiland.

The Department of Public Administration of the University of Kansas announces the appointment of Kelly LeRoux and Michael Moody. Kelly LeRoux is completing a doctoral degree at Wayne State University. Michael Moody is completing a doctorate at the University of Kentucky.

Steve Holden, Assistant Professor of Information Systems at UMBC, has been asked to participate in the National Research Council's study labeled "Social Security Administration's E-Government Strategy and Planning for the Future" Steve hosted the study team's first public meeting at UMBC in October 2005.

Call for Proposals

The web site below has the call for proposals for the 2006 annual research conference of the Association of Policy Analysis and Management. Members of the Public Management Research Association are encouraged to submit panel and paper proposals for the APPAM conference. Please note that since there will not be a PMRA conference in fall 2006 there will be no conflict with PMRA. Participation by members of PMRA will enhance the quality of managements panels at APPAM. <http://www.appam.org/conferences/fall/madison2006/index.asp>

that part of policy studies known as policy implementation emerged in the late 1980s. The public administration programs at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University, the University of Kansas, the University of Southern California, and the University of Pittsburgh (later replaced by Indiana University) agreed to support a new journal to be known as the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (JPART)*. A new section of the American Society for Public Administration, the Section on Research, was established to serve as a subscription vehicle for *JPART*.

The first issue of *JPART* was published in January 1990. The opening editorial statement explains in some detail the reasons for establishing *JPART* and the unique purposes the *Journal* hoped to accomplish. Here are key excerpts from that editorial statement.

First, the Journal is avowedly scholarly. Our task is to build the body of knowledge through empirical research and theoretical inquiry. In this scholarly pursuit we acknowledge the applied nature of the practice of public administration. We also acknowledge that important forms of scholarship in public administration translate theory to practice and practice to theory. This journal, however, will concentrate on theoretical and empirical scholarship, leaving the important task of application to other publications.

Second, the Journal is empirical and multidisciplinary. We accept the full range of empirical methods practiced in the social sciences.

The Journal takes methodology seriously and insists on the appropriateness and correctness of research methods. The Journal is not, however, a publication on methodology.

It was Harold Lasswell who first used the phrase "the policy sciences" and who initially developed the public policy perspective. Following Lasswell, the Journal presumes to embrace the organizational, administrative and policy sciences as they apply to government and governance.

Third, the Journal is theoretical. Because public administration is multi-disciplinary, it is also multi-theoretical. The Journal seeks the development of relevant theory and acknowledges that theories are as often competitive as they are compatible. We reject theoretical hegemony. We do seek the field-testing, refinement, and ordering of theory. In an applied field such as public administration, we expect theory to be both inductive and deductive and to emerge and evolve not only from the study of public organizations and public administrators but from the practices of public administration.

Fourth, the Journal is not passive. We take it as given that the knowledge base in public administration is incomplete. The

Journal seeks to become at once a primary outlet for research and a stimulus for research. The Journal consciously seeks to strengthen and focus theory through research. Because theory informs practice, we accept the premise that better theory holds the promise for better public administration.

Now beginning its sixteenth year *JPART* continues to hold closely to the principles set out in its initial editorial statement. *JPART* achieved self-supporting status in 1994, and was included in the Social Science Citation Index and JSTOR in 2001. In 2002 the Oxford University Press became the publisher of *JPART*. In comparative international academic rankings in the public administration category, *JPART* now has a higher citation impact factor than *PAR* and is only behind *Governance*, the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, and the British journal *Public Administration*.

The Public Management Research Association

From the beginning there was extensive overlap between the principals involved in the origins of *JPART* and principals involved in the origins of the public management research conferences. In the spring of 1991, not long after the publication of the first two issues of *JPART* and before the first Public Management Research Conference, George Frederickson and Brinton Milward met at the ASPA conference in Los Angeles, where they discussed at length the research conference initiative, the *JPART* initiative, and how they might be productively linked. Many of the same people played key roles in the creation of both, so there was from the beginning of both *JPART* and the conferences a lively and productive interaction. For example, some papers not published in the edited books coming from the earlier public management research conferences were submitted to *JPART*. Over time it was increasingly evident that many participants in the conferences were also publishing their work in *JPART*; indeed, by the third conference at the University of Kansas it was clear that there was a connection between *JPART* and the conferences that was greater than the fact that many of the same people were involved.

In the late 1990s there began a series of conversations among the principals involved in the development of the research conferences on one hand and *JPART* on the other hand regarding the possibility of organizing a new and separate professional association for public management research scholars. Virtually all academic disciplines and professional fields have at least one association dedicated exclusively to theory and to scholarly research. It was an

accident of history, it was argued, that the field of public administration did not have such an academic research association. In these conversations it was pointed out that the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) is a “big tent” organization including academics and practitioners and that over the years fewer and fewer leading scholars have participated in ASPA affairs and presented their research at ASPA conferences. The American Political Science Association (APSA), and particularly the Public Administration Section of APSA, was thought to be responsive to the research and theory interests of those in public administration who identify particularly with political science. But APSA journals include very little on public administration and the Section on Public Administration is only one of many sections competing for panel and paper space at the annual APSA conference. Some research academics in public administration are active in the Academy of Management, and particularly the Public and Non-Profit Section of the Academy, but public administration is a small part of the wide scope of the Academy. Individual public administration schools and departments, rather than individuals, are the members of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). NASPAA sponsors the Commission of Peer Review and Accreditation, which manages the accreditation of master’s degrees in the field. NASPAA also sponsors the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* and an annual conference having primarily to do with matters of public administration education, including curriculum, pedagogy, and accreditation. Finally, many public administration research scholars have been active in the Association for Public Policy and Management (APPAM), but policy implementation has tended to be a relatively minor part of the journal and conference activities of APPAM. This rather wide range of “homes” tended to fragment the body of public administration research scholars and to diminish the potential for a stronger sense of common identity among them.

Although this fragmented state of professional association allegiances among public administration research scholars had long been the case, by the late 1990s there were some things new under the sun. Included among these new things was the quality and success of the Public Management Research Conferences and the quality and success of *JPART*. Why not, it was suggested, simply arrange a professional association for public management research scholars around the conferences and the *Journal*? This idea was referred to by Brinton Milward as the “movement to

Attention Junior Scholars, Doctoral Students, Doctoral Advisors

The Paul A. Volcker Endowment for Public Service Research and Education Junior Scholar Research Grant Program

2006 Call for Proposals

Deadline: March 15, 2006 (Applications accepted no earlier than March 1st.)

Scope of the Grant Award

The Section for Public Administration of the American Political Science Association (APSA) invites applications and research proposals from junior scholars researching public administration issues affecting governance in the United States and abroad. Proposals will be judged on their potential to shed new light on important public administration questions, their scholarly and methodological rigor, and their promise for advancing practice and theory development. Recipients may conduct research on issues affecting or relevant to public administration at any level (or levels) of government, in any nation (or across nations), and from whatever locale is most useful or appropriate for their research purposes.

Funding Process and Purposes

Individual grants are not renewable. As a part of the APSA Centennial Campaign, support from the Volcker Endowment can, but need not, involve research residencies at the Centennial Center in Washington. Grants will be awarded annually by a three-person Volcker Awards Committee. The number, size of grants, and allocation of grants (to doctoral students and tenure-track assistant professors) awarded annually will be up to the Volcker Awards Committee. Initially, grants are expected to range between \$2,000 and \$3,000.

For further information call APSA, send email to the Grants office at grants@apsanet.org, contact Robert Durant (Chair), Volcker Junior Scholar Awards Committee, (durant@american.edu), or visit http://www.apsanet.org/content_6340.cfm

have a home of our own.” Milward served as the convener of an informal group comprised of the principals of the series of research conferences and of *JPART*, including Barry Bozeman, Donald Kettl, George Frederickson, Lois Wise, Laurence O’Toole, Laurence Lynn, Kenneth Meier, Beryl Radin, Hal Rainey, and Jeffery Brudney. This group agreed, in principle, to the development of an association for public management research and asked George Frederickson to draft a charter and bylaws. After passing through several stages of revisions and amendments the Charter and Bylaws for the newly established Public Management Research Association were approved in 2002. PMRA, working with local hosts, now organizes and operates the biennial Public Management Research Conferences and *JPART* is the official journal of the association. A twice-yearly publication, *Management Matters*, which is both in print and on the Internet, is the PMRA newsletter. PMRA is incorporated in the state of Kansas, and the University of Kansas serves as the secretariat. Brinton Milward served a term of two years as the founding president of PMRA. He was succeeded by Kenneth Meier. Laurence O’Toole is the current president and Norma Riccucci is the president-elect.

Many active members of PMRA remain very involved in other professional research and academic associations, particularly ASPA, APSA, APPAM, and the Academy of Management, and continue to publish in their journals.

While he was PMRA president, Kenneth Meier appointed a committee on the internationalization of the association. Headed by Laurence O’Toole, this committee recommended, among other things, including more non-American scholars on the *JPART* board of editors and inviting more international scholars to the PMRA research conferences. These and other recommendations of the internationalization committee have been implemented, and the results are already seen in the pages of *JPART* and in the composition of the recent PMRA research conference at the University of Southern California.

During his tenure as president of PMRA, Kenneth Meier asked the executive board to approve two PMRA awards, one for career contributions to public management research and the other for the best article in *JPART*. At the PMRA research conference at USC, Laurence Lynn received the first career contributions to public management award and Robert Schwartz and Raanan Sulitzeanu-Kenan received the first *JPART* best article award.

The story of the origins of PMRA could be used to illustrate several things. For example, there are, in this story, many examples of academic entrepreneurship. Without key entrepreneurs willing to lead the way, willing to be subjected to criticism, and willing to take risks, it is unlikely that there would be the Research Conferences, *JPART*, or PMRA. Leadership matters.

One sees in the latter stages of the PMRA story an illustration of the garbage can version of decision theory. To use garbage can theory metaphors, by the late 1990s the Research Conferences and *JPART* were both floating about in the decision soup. *JPART* was a solution, a good academic journal looking for the right problem to solve. The Research Conferences were an ideal problem for *JPART* to solve. Or, put the other way, the Research Conferences were a solution, a highly credible series of research gatherings at many of the best universities in the field and a string of high quality publications, looking for problems to solve. *JPART* had a problem—it needed a home. None of the other academic and professional organizations in public administration and public policy, which were also floating about in the decision soup, were a suitable home for *JPART*. So, *JPART* and the Research Conferences found each other in the decision soup and together established PMRA. But, as the telling of this history shows, combining the research conferences with *JPART* and from that combination creating PMRA took more than a decade.

Finally, too much can be made of intentionality. In their version of institutional theory James March and Johan Olsen refer to the meander of history. The story of what is now PMRA is just such a meander. And the meander continues.



Jocelyn Johnston and Barbara Romzek



Ken Meier



Yan Tang and Dan Mazmanian

**Scenes from the 8th National
Public Management Research Conference
at the University of Southern California**



Frank Thompson, Steve Kelman,
George Frederickson, and Jack Knott



Carolyn Heinrich, Larry Lynn, and Carolyn Hill



George Boyne, Richard Walker, and Chris Skelcher



Brian Williams, Tony Bertelli, and Greg Hill



Dale Krane, Richard Stillman, and Ed Jennings



Cam Stivers, Peter deLeon, Fran Berry

2005 PMRA Conference Photos



Beryl Radin



Larry O'Toole and Ken Meier



Pat Ingraham, Brint Milward, and Dan Mazmanian



Al Roberts, David Van Slyke, and John Clayton Thomas



Perri G, Jonathan Breul, Gail Grella, and Carolyn Heinrich



George Boyne and Jeff Straussman

2005 PMRA Conference Photos



Joaquín Herranz, John Bryson, and Stephen Page



Terry Cooper, Dan Mazmanian, and Brint Milward



Larry O'Toole, Conor O'Toole, and Todd La Porte

Don't forget to check out
the PMRA website at:

www.pmranet.org

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the public management research association newsletter

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